

TEN THEMES

The following thematic statements are offered as creative approaches to social studies education for teachers and school administrators as they adapt their curricula to the new frameworks.

These themes serve as a way of finding meaningful ways of addressing the standards and expectations and, perhaps more importantly, as a way of using the frameworks to encourage higher-order thinking in our students. They are not to be understood as required standards in their own right.

Theme A: Conflict and Cooperation

- This theme would include successful and failed efforts at the resolution of conflict and the creation of cooperation between individuals, groups and organizations at the local and national level, and between groups and nations on the international stage.
- Examples of such efforts are local attempts at conservation, the writing of the New Hampshire/U.S. Constitution, the causes of the American Civil War, international trade agreements.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: What is legitimate authority? Why are there conflicts in the world? How interdependent are peoples? How rules and laws made and what are the differences in their usage?

Theme B: Civic Ideals, Practices, and Engagement

- This theme would include an investigation of the core values of the individual, community, state, and nation and the ways in which these values are expressed and practiced in differing societies.
- Examples of these core values include suffrage, "no taxation without representation", land ownership/land use, and federalism.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: What is civic participation and how can I be involved? What is the role of the citizen in the community and in the nation, and as a member of the world community? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved over time?

Theme C: People, Places and Environment

- This theme explores how individuals, groups, and societies interact with each other and with their physical and social environments.
- Examples of these interactions include the use of public land, Triangular Trade, migration, and the impact of the Industrial Revolution.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: How has the relationship between people and their physical settings changed over time? How do urban and rural lives differ? How do we balance the world's resources with needs and wants?

Theme D: Material Wants and Needs

- This theme examines the underlying principles of individual and collective economic choices as well as major systems of production and commerce.
- Examples of these principles and systems are the role of government in the economy, the stock market, alternative energy resources, and feudalism.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: What is the difference between needs and wants and how do we satisfy them? What is the role of money in everyday life? Why is scarcity the basis of economics? How has conflict over resources changed the world? How have economic systems changed and evolved?

Theme E: Cultural Development, Interaction, and Change

- This theme investigates the systems of beliefs, knowledge, values, and traditions as well as practices. As cultures interact or collide, each culture is impacted by adaptation, assimilation, acculturation, diffusion, and conflict.
- Examples of these systems and practices are nationalism, capitalism, urbanization, and monotheism.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: What is the role of tradition? How has ethnocentrism impacted history? How does global transformation impact cultures?

Theme F: Global Transformation

- This theme seeks to bring meaning to the exchanges among civilizations from earliest times through the gradual growth of global interactions.
- Examples of this theme include international organizations, competition and interdependence, pandemics, exploration.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: How can tension between national interests and global priorities be resolved? What was the impact of early empire building? How do we balance human rights and cultural traditions? Why should no society/economy/country be studied in isolation? How have nations become economically interdependent?

Theme G: Science, Technology, and Society

- This theme studies the historic and current impact of the interaction and interdependence of science, technology, and society in a variety of cultural settings.
- Examples of this impact include issues of intellectual property rights, evolution of the exchange of goods, domestication of animals, and development of weapons of war.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: Is technology always better than what it replaces? What are the real costs of new technologies? How can we manage science and technology to provide the greatest benefit? Who benefits from scientific and technological innovations?

Theme H: Individualism, Equality and Authority

- This theme focuses on the tension created by the search for freedom and security, for liberty and equality, and for individualism and the common good. This tension has led to the establishment to a variety of authorities as well as safeguards against abuse.
- Examples of this tension include rules to prevent bullying, control of natural resources, planned economies, and colonialism.

- This theme explores such essential questions as: Why is there disparity between the rich and the poor? How do we balance the rights of the individual against the rights of the group? What is equality? What is authority?

Theme I: Patterns of Social and Political Interaction

- This theme focuses on the changing patterns of class, ethnicity, race, and gender in social and political relations.
- Examples of these patterns are human rights issues, the changing role of women in the economy, immigration issues, and slavery.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: Why is it important for all people to be treated equally no matter what their differences are? Is a multicultural society viable? How do changing patterns in social and political relations initiate social movements? How have societies historically limited or encouraged social mobility? Why do humans engage in ethnic cleansing?

Theme J: Human Expression and Communication

- This theme examines how people have expressed their feelings and ideas in art, literature, music, and philosophy.
- Examples of this theme include freedom of expression, artistic patronage, sense of place, reflection of history in the arts.
- This theme explores such essential questions as: How have literary and artistic expressions reflected particular eras? What is beauty? What is the role of popular culture in society?